

Upper Darby, PA—Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07), Upper Darby Mayor F. Raymond Shay and other township officials met to celebrate \$500,000 in federal funding awarded for the township's Gateway Project, and to discuss the best ways to take advantage of these resources. Recognizing the opportunity for further development along Market Street, the Congressman advocated for and won project funding through the federal appropriations process.

—

“With expansive plans for a new parking structure, office building, and even street lamps, the Gateway Project is key element in the vitalization of Upper Darby,” said the Congressman. “By expanding the area's commercial potential, the Gateway is a tremendous opportunity for both the township and our District.”

Following a check presentation, the Congressman talked with Upper Darby officials about the implementation of these funds to best serve the community as a whole. The project's aim is to vitalize Market Street by improving pedestrian and vehicular traffic with new infrastructure, most notably a 310 space parking garage that will support SEPTA's 69th Street Terminal, retail merchants and an adjacent 60,000 square foot office building. By enhancing transportation in the area, the township intends the new Gateway to make Upper Darby even more attractive to businesses while also creating new housing opportunities.

“I have always been taken by the vibrancy, diversity and pride of the Upper Darby community,” said Congressman Sestak. “I look forward to continuing to work with the township on this and other projects to ensure that Upper Darby remains an attractive place to live, visit and do business.”

This funding is a vital part of the Congressman economic development efforts in his District as he has emphasized that this region must prepare for an increasingly uncertain economic climate. As Vice-Chairman of the Small Business Committee, the Congressman has worked hard to reverse troubling economic trends in his District. Since 2001, Delaware County has lost 762 small businesses and 22 percent of its manufacturing. In addition, the real median income level in the Congressman's District dropped \$300 between 2001 and 2006, while costs of health care and education have skyrocketed, 70 percent and 59 percent respectively.

To work on these issues, the Congressman has held five economic development summits. December's Business Procurement attracted more than 400 small businessmen and women, bringing them together with more than 40 large businesses and more than 15 federal and state government contractors to increase opportunities for small businesses, which receive only 6.7 percent of federal contracts in the District, as opposed to the federally mandated 23 percent.

Most recently, the Congressman hosted a Workforce Development Summit, the goal of which was to address the need for a local workforce qualified for high-value manufacturing jobs. The summit was designed to bring together administrators of vocational and technical schools, as well as those schools that have vo-tech curriculum, and team them up with businesses in our region for a two-fold purpose. The first was to stress the value of teaching our students the skills that businesses are in need of and are actively seeking out. Second was to encourage businesses to have a mentoring roll in the lives of students who will one day make up our workforce.

Other summits held by the Congressman include:

- An Economic Summit at Widener University to discuss economic development strategies and revitalization.
- An Economic Growth and Resources Summit at Delaware County Community College to connect local businesses with federal, state and local resources.
- A summit on Challenges Facing Working Women and Women Small Business Owners, attended by Home Small Business Committee Chairwoman Nydia Velazquez.

The Congressman has strongly supported legislation in Washington to improve the economic climate in the nation, and specifically in the District:

- Originated amendments requiring the Department of Defense – prior to awarding contracts worth more than \$5 million – to conduct market research on the ability of small businesses to do the work; and stopping the government from unfairly “bundling” small contracts into “mega-contracts,” a practice that makes it harder for small business to compete.
- The Small Business Investment Expansion Act to reform the Small Business Administration to help struggling businesses obtain the capital necessary to start or grow their operations. It also improves access to venture capital and “angel investments,” to spur innovation and ensure our nation’s global competitiveness.
- The Small Business Regulatory Improvement Act to require rules affecting small business to

take into account any direct or indirect effects on those businesses before the rule goes into effect.

- The SBA Entrepreneurial Development Programs Act, supporting and expanding small business development center programs.
- The Federal Housing Finance Reform Act, which takes measures to address the current housing crisis, preserving and promoting home ownership, a key part of economic development.
- Voted for the Renewable Energy and Job Creation Act of 2008 to extend tax credits that support alternative energy, including solar energy and wind power, and also create jobs. In 2006, such efforts generated 8.5 million jobs and nearly \$970 billion in revenue.

*Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.*

###